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Humboldt's Ideal of Humanity

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HUMBOLDT'S IDEAL OF HUMANITY

BY

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A. B. University of Illinois, 1910

THESIS

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Chapter I

HUMBOLDT'S LIFE AND WORKS

The eighteenth century is characterized by the universal effort to establish a new ideal of humanity for which the ancients were to be the model. During the subsequent two centuries, however, this original purpose of the older humanistic movement had been lost sight of. As soon as the great religious questions had been settled by the wars, we notice a new interest in all questions concerning man, his nature and future development. Philosophers and poets make the problem of human nature the subject of their investigation and representation. But it is especially in poetry and in aesthetic criticism

that we find this problem of the time treated.

At the beginning of the new era of German literature Drollinger, a Swiss poet, expresses this by saying that man and man's nature was the chief though the most difficult subject of poetry. From this time on we notice in poets like Haller, Gellert and others the conscious effort to study human nature, and to give expression to their discoveries in their writings. It is in this way that literature and the search for the beautiful takes the lead in all important questions concerning man, and that gradually the effort to create a new ideal of man is to be noticed. This new ideal of man is not only to exist in the works of literature, but is to be realized in actual life. One of the aids in creating such an ideal were the ancients, especially the Greeks, for it was the general belief at that time, that the Greeks during the period of their highest development had embodied the true ideal of humanity,

not only in their works of art and literature but also in their life. It is for this reason that the classical literature of Germany in the eighteenth century belongs to the so-called new humanistic period.

Among the men who, in addition to the great poets and critics, Lessing, Herder, Schiller and Goethe, were the great leaders in the movement just described, Wilhelm von Humboldt occupies a foremost place. It is the object of this paper to show in detail the contribution which Humboldt made to the ideal of humanity in his writings and to what extent it found expression in his own life and activity.

Carl Wilhelm von Humboldt, born at Potsdam on the twenty-second of June 1767, was the son of an army officer of high rank and of nobility, Alexander Georg von Humboldt.

Together with his brother Alexander, two years his junior, Wilhelm received his early instruction from Joachim Campe, private tutor at his father's house and a devout apostle of the "Aufklärung". When in the seventies Campe left the house, his place was taken by Kunth, a serious, thorough-going man, in no sense a match for the alert minds of his two pupils.

Early in 1779 the boys' father died. Kunth prooved a friend and adviser to their mother, a woman of delicate constitution, and lived with the boys the year around in Berlin. None of the advantages which the great city had to offer were withheld in their education. Kunth introduced them into the Berlin circle of the "Aufklärung", and they soon became familiar with

that thought.

It was to Johann Jakob Engel, however, to whom Wilhelm was indebted for the greater part of his early education. Engel, later the tutor of Prince Frederich Wilhelm (William the Third), acquainted Wilhelm von Humboldt with the doctrines of the "Aufklärung" and presented them in his modest and genial way, in their most pleasant light. He encouraged Humboldt to study this thought in the works of the great ancient writers, and Humboldt's keen mind, for a time at least, found great satisfaction in this rationalistic thought in which all sentimentality was condemned. After a time, however, his nature expanded, he longed for something that would satisfy his feelings, his heart, for beside his sharp reason there was in his character a decided element of sensuousness and sentiment. It was in the circle of the wives of these "Aufklärer" that Humboldt found satisfaction, and in this so-called Tugend-

bund, a society for intellectual and ethical uplifting, he met the object of his first-love, Henriette Herz, the wife of one of the "Aufklärer", a most charming and gifted woman.

In the fall of 1787 Humboldt and his brother Alexander went to the University of Frankfurt a. d. Oder, but in the spring he left that University and went to Göttingen.

After the rather gay society in Berlin of which he had been a part, Humboldt found the social life at Göttingen rather cold and uninviting. On the other hand, his instructors offered him all that he had hoped for. Although specializing in the study of law he became a student and ardent admirer of Heyne, the great philologist who was lecturing on the History of antiquity. Heyne's daughter Therese was Humboldt's warm friend and shared with him the ideal of "the True, the Good and the Beautiful." Through letters of introduction Humboldt

became acquainted with various men representing the different thoughts of his time. His innate interest for human nature as well as his deep insight and understanding of it lead him deeper and deeper into the study of man. Among his many acquaintances and friends Humboldt held none so dear as Forster, and the years 1788 and 1789 were those of their greatest intimacy. They had many views in common. Their philosophy of life was the same, they both held reason above feeling and Humboldt admired the older friend for the intellectual superiority and his warm, generous heart.

The French Revolution which broke out in the summer of 1789 drew Humboldt to Paris. With Campe, his companion on the trip, Humboldt attended the sessions of the National Convention, but his interest was centered on the French people rather than on the political events. After his return to Germany, Humboldt decided to take a trip to Switzerland where he enjoyed the beauties of

nature with the fervor that always marked his enjoyment of the beautiful.

After the completion of his university studies in 1790, Humboldt entered the civil service as "Refrendar" in the state court. He was not satisfied with the political atmosphere of Berlin, the rather lofty spirit of the "Aufklärung" had given place to a superficial and shallow piety. It did not take Humboldt long to decide on withdrawing from public activity for the greater duty, as he considered it, of self culture. In answer to one of his friend's inquiries as to why he was leaving a promising career Humboldt said that his idea of doing his duty in the world was to influence the character of humanity, and that only he who could influence himself, could influence humanity.

In 1789 he had become engaged to Caroline von Dacheröden, the daughter of a high official in Dacheröden and he was married in 1791 after he had left the public

service with the title of counselor to a legation. The young couple spent the first year of their married life on the estate of Caroline, and Humboldt devoted the greater part of this time to the study of philosophy, more especially to that of Kant. The development of the French Revolution now became the theme of his political philosophy. The many questions concerning the duties and responsibilities of the state towards its citizens which presented themselves to him, he answered in his first publication of 1792, "Ideen zu Einem Versuch die Grenzen der Wirksamkeit des Staats zu bestimmen". Humboldt's ideas on the duty of the state is that the state is made for man, not man for the state, that the sole purpose of the state is to insure inner freedom as well as exterior security to its citizens, that it should never encroach on the rights of its subjects nor should it sacrifice the man for the citizen.

The whole thought of this work centers on

Humboldt's theory of the supreme worth of individuality and freedom of the individual. After he had concluded this book Humboldt took up his classical studies with renewed enthusiasm, for since Engel's inspiring lectures on the ancients this study had been for him of most vital interest. Humboldt shared this enthusiasm with Friederich August Wolf, professor of philology at the University of Halle a. S., who became his intimate friend and correspondent. The Greeks represented to each of these men, the ideal of harmonious humanity and they felt that only through an intensive study of their works could they acquire the knowledge and understanding of human nature and of humanity. The "Skizze über die Griechen" sums up Humboldt's attitude towards the study of the ancients at which he had then arrived.

In April, 1793, Humboldt paid a visit to Friederich Schiller in Jena and was so carried away by his personality and remarkable intellectuality that he

decided to move there so that he might be in closer contact with him.

In the following year he carried out this plan. A deep and lasting friendship sprang up between Schiller and himself, a friendship which became a great factor in the development of both men. Schiller and Humboldt had almost daily discussions bearing on these subjects which were uppermost in their minds, namely, the study of the classical spirit, the ideal of humanity, and the method of development towards that ideal. Schiller had just finished his "Aesthetische Briefe" and the theory of aesthetic education as therein developed became one of the main subjects of their discussions. Humboldt was a receptive and critical nature who was able to assimilate Schiller's profound thoughts and to return them with the most helpful suggestions. He himself during this period wrote two important essays. The one was on the difference in sexes, "Ueber den Geschlechtsunderschied", a discussion

of the part which man and woman play in the harmonious development of humanity. Man and woman, he said, must supplement one another, the difference in sexes is only a means of nature to beget the highest form of life. The true ideal would be sexless, containing the highest qualities that both man and woman can offer. The second essay on masculine and feminine form, "Ueber maennliche und weibliche Form", treats practically of the same problems as did the first. It was at this time that the journal "Horen" to which Goethe and Humboldt became regular contributors was founded by Schiller. Its purpose was to lead man to pure humanity, and to show the way to it through truth and beauty.

Humboldt's intercourse with Schiller was personal as well as intellectual. Their wives were intimate friends and hardly a day passed when the two families were not together. These years were for Humboldt among the most beautiful of his life.

After fourteen months in Jena the sickness of his mother called Humboldt to her side and with his family he left there is July, 1795, and for over a year they all lived at Tegel.

The intellectual life at Berlin was still as distasteful to Humboldt as it has been in 1790, and he longed to be back in Jena where each day had given him new inspiration. The correspondence which he carried on with Schiller during these years was the tie which bound him most closely to his former mode of life. The interchange of thoughts was but a continuation of the discussions they had had in Jena, and one needs only to read Humboldt's eulogy of Schiller introductory to their correspondence to realize what this meant to him.

It was consequently with a feeling of great happiness that Humboldt felt able to return to Jena in November, 1796. There through Schiller, he became a warm friend of Goethe. A more appreciative critic

and interpreter the two poets could not have found. Goethe was deeply interested in Humboldt's translation of the Agamemnon of Aeschylus which he was just then making, and he himself was able to help the great genius in the final revision of his charming epic poem, "Herman und Dorothea".

Among other plans for literary activity, Humboldt had the idea of writing a comparative anthropology but this was not to be carried out in Jena.

After the death of his mother in November, 1796, Humboldt was enabled to gratify his early desire for travel. He had hoped to go to Italy, but in the summer of 1797 the troubles in that country caused a change in his plans and he went to Paris instead. The following year he surprised his friends in Germany with a critical treatise on "Herman und Dorothea" in which he set forth his theory of aesthetics. The central thought of the treatise was the aesthetic culture and education of man

and of the race. Humboldt's life in Paris was not exclusively devoted to study. His home over which his charming and highly gifted wife presided was the center of a circle of prominent men and women of France and Germany, and Humboldt through his social charm and wide interests was a greatly admired leader in this circle. Humboldt embraced every opportunity to study the French people, especially from the point of view of their aesthetic peculiarities, and his letters to friends in Germany contain most interesting facts and results of his observation.

In the summer of 1799 Humboldt made his first trip to Spain in which his purpose was the study of man and the nation. It was on this trip, however, that his philosophical interest in language was aroused and that he began his work as a philologist with the study of the Bascan idiom. After another short visit to Spain in the pursuit of these studies Humboldt and his family left Paris and returned to Germany. He visited a few days

days with Wolf and with Schiller on his way to Berlin. Life in Berlin again proved a disappointment to Humboldt. The political conditions there were most repelling and he greatly welcomed therefore his appointment as ambassador to Rome.

Ten years of leisure devoted almost entirely to self-culture had prepared Humboldt for active and practical life. He was now anxious to take up some work in the interest of his country especially as he considered such work to have a part in his self-development towards the ideal.

In the fall of 1802 Humboldt and his family went to Rome and as he had hoped, it was here that his self-culture reached its consummation. He soon felt at home in the congenial surroundings, and through his sincere enthusiasm for Rome and his interest in its historic treasures he greatly pleased the citizens and became a most welcome resident. He filled his position with distinction

and tact. In Rome as in Paris, his home was the center of a brilliant social circle, still with no one did he feel inclined to hold such intimate intercourse as he had held with Schiller. Rome, however, filled his entire life, and as he idealised it, the beautiful city embodied the spirit of his ideal for him. The study of the ancients which was always a favorite occupation of his gained new life here. He resumed work on his translation of Pindar and Aeschylus and completed it in 1804. The enrichment of his own language in power of expression as well as in depth and significance, which he intended to gain by this translation, he had actually attained.

The linguistic studies which had first attracted him in Spain now claimed the greater part of his time. In a letter to his friend Wolf he said that he thought he had discovered the art of making language the vehicle, the means of reaching the very depth of human life. It was from this humanistic point of view as well as from

that of the linguist that he studied the history and science of language. In addition to the translations above mentioned and a few other works of minor importance Humboldt wrote the sketch "Ueber Latium und Hellas" and "Ueber den Untergang der Griechischen Freistaaten" during these years.

In October, 1808, Humboldt had to return to Germany on account of private matters. It was with the firm conviction of returning to Italy that he started off, for he hoped to stay in Rome for the rest of his life. Here two of his sons had died and were buried. This together with his love for Rome seemed sufficient to bind him for ever to the eternal city. He was, however, not to return there. His remarkable attainments were to be put to test in the service of his native country. In January, 1809, he was made head of the Department of Public Instruction.

At this time the Prussian administration was in

a most deplorable condition. With the peace of Tilsit, Prussia had given up half of her territorial possessions, and Napoleon was unquestionably ruler of Germany. The seemingly hopeless condition of his country affected Humboldt deeply and this moved him to accept a position which drew him into more active service. In April, 1809, he took up his work in Königsberg, at the time the seat of the Prussian administration. Humboldt soon saw that his task lay in the regeneration of the Prussian state through a reorganization of its entire school system. How far he was successful in accomplishing this end can be seen from the present system of education in the German schools which was based on the reforms instituted by Humboldt. The greatest monument to Humboldt's work in this line is the University of Berlin of which he was the real founder. Humboldt was far-sighted enough to see that the courage and patriotic spirit of the German youth could only be reawakened through the influence of the greatest minds of

their country. As soon as the University was formed he spent a great amount of time and energy in procuring leading scholars as professors. It was not long, however, before the finances necessary for his educational reforms gave out, and he was not the man to stay in a position after he felt himself loosing ground. The administration through the inefficiency of its ministers was constantly becoming more powerless, and Humboldt's department could no longer hold its own. It was thus with a feeling of relief that he accepted the post of ambassador to Vienna in June, 1810.

In his political career Humboldt had to face many storms, but he did not permit the political troubles of that period to affect him. It was his duty at Vienna to ascertain the sentiment and attitude of the Austrians toward the alliance between Prussia and Russia, and no man could have been found to accomplish this with more tact and discretion than Humboldt. He soon became the center

of the gay Austrian society. At the same time he was able to pursue his linguistic studies, the object of which was still the Basque language.

It was not until August, 1813, that Austria, after a long period of indecision joined the alliance of Prussia and Russia, and it was generally recognized that this was due to the successful diplomacy of Humboldt and the Russian delegate to the Congress at Prague. In recognition of this service Humboldt was presented with the iron cross, by his monarch. During the ensuing war against Napoleon Humboldt kept in close contact with the headquarters at Frankfurt. He was again Prussian representative in the peace congress of Chatillon. After the capitulation of Paris on the thirty-first of March, the victorious armies entered the city and dictated terms of peace. On November first of the same year the famous Congress of Vienna was assembled to consider the restoration of the older order of things and to arrange for the

organization of the German system of government. At the close of the conference at which he had been a Prussian delegate with Hardenberg the chancellor, Humboldt went to Berlin and after he had devoted himself for a short time to his studies, he was called to Paris on a diplomatic mission. Napoleon had again been and this time completely defeated at Waterloo, and the second Paris peace was to be negotiated. In connection with this, Humboldt wrote a most significant document in which he expressed his views on what should be demanded of France by her conquerors. It was the work of a far-sighted stateman, but the other men, more influential than he in the actual carrying out of the negotiations were willing to make the terms easy and so a peace was concluded in spite of Humboldt, with terms most unfavorable to Prussia.

After attending another Congress at Frankfurt in November, 1816, Humboldt was sent to London as ambassador by Hardenberg who feared his growing popularity and who wished to have him at some distance. Before he left Germany

Humboldt was called to take part in a council on the administration of finance. His superiority and success in this council was so marked and called forth such general admiration that Hardenberg filled with envy and fear hastened Humboldt's departure for England.

In October, 1817, Humboldt with his wife and married daughter arrived in London. His stay there was nothing less than exile, exile made pleasant by his reception into the best circles of London society. As it was not a satisfactory post for Humboldt he sent in a request for his recall and expressed the wish to retire to private life. Hardenberg's suspicious and narrow-minded attitude had produced a distaste for public life in Humboldt, and his ever-present wish for a return of leisure and a period devoted to self-culture was making him still more restless.

In November, 1818, he returned to Germany and was given a position in the government by Hardenberg who did not then dare to drop him entirely from civil service.

In January, 1810, by order of the Cabinet the ministry was reorganized and Humboldt given a responsible position in it. Here he gained great popularity in the position he took on the questions arising in his work. He advocated a representative government in which the state courts and those of the estates should divide the work of the government between them and both remain under the final jurisdiction of the federal government. He wished to have the estates take part in the government of the land but he would not give them any power of initiative. The idea underlying this policy was to bring the citizens in closer contact with their state and to thereby increase the interest and enthusiasm for it. His views in regard to this scheme were most fully expressed in a paper written in 1819. Humboldt's policy was so enthusiastically received by his countrymen that Hardenberg could no longer contain his jealous fear of Humboldt as a possible rival to the chancellorship and he finally succeeded in obtaining from the

ing the order for Humboldt's withdrawal from the government.

It was with regret that Humbolut gave up a position through which he had hoped to benefit his country and his king, but personally he was very well satisfied to get back to his quiet life of meditation and study. From 1826 until the time of his death his studies were centered on comparative philology. Humboldt's chief thought was to arrive by these studies at a truer and deeper understanding of humanity. Language he found to be the key to this understanding. In June, 1820, Humbold read an essay on comparative philology in relation to the different epochs of the development of language before the Berlin Academy of Science. His pursuit of the linguistic development of man lead him first to the study of the Bascan language, then to Sanscrit and finally Kawi, the language of the island of Java.

In 1828 Humboldt went to London with his wife and his daughter who was married to Herr von Bülow, then

ambassador to England. The rest of Humboldt's life was uneventful. He took a passive patriotic interest in the course of events in his own country, but as his entire political and diplomatic career had only been of secondary importance to him he now gave his thoughts to linguistic and scientific work. Language meant to Humboldt a means of perfecting one's individuality.

In March, 1829, Caroline von Humboldt died, after several years of failing health, and her death seemed to break the last tie that bound Humboldt to the world about him. More than ever, he now craved solitude. His friends seemed to realize this, for unless he especially asked to have them come, they never troubled him.

In 1830 Humboldt was invited by an order of the Cabinet to a seat in the Council of State, a position of no importance or influence, and one he had no desire for. But the offer to become the director of a commission to superintend the arrangement of the interior of the New Museum which came to him at the same time was most agree-

able to him. His love for art which occupied a place of almost equal importance to his scientific interests was given a practical field to work in, and this occupation brightened the last years of his life.

Another interesting fact in his later life was his poetic productiveness. His thoughts and ideals, the memories of his whole life seemed to crave expression, and they found it in his poetry, and in the countless songs he wrote in the years from 1831 to his death. Taken as a whole they are a poetic diary, a self-revelation. These sonnets imperfect in form as they were, taken together with Humboldt's letters to his friend Charlotte Diede, did more to bring him before the public and to make him popular, in the best sense of the word, than did his more laborious philosophical or critical works. He was, as Spranger puts it, the classicist of letter-writing. Here spirit and form were harmonious, were one. His letters to Schiller and Goethe reveal his character and

the relation in which he stood to the two great minds of German literature, but we find him more truly the friend and adviser in the letters already mentioned, to Charlotte Diede and to his wife Caroline.

In the winter of 1835 Humboldt caught a severe cold on a walk to the resting place of his wife and after ten days of illness he died as he had wished to die, conscious to the last and ready to go, leaving the dear ones who stood about him with words of thanks and love.

Chapter II

HUMBOLDT AND THE ANCIENTS

The particular ideal of humanity which, as we have seen, was introduced by the representative men of the eighteenth century, was inspired by the lives and the works of the Ancient Greeks. Humboldt in his idealized conception of the Greeks accepted them as the nation which most nearly attained this ideal. They were the people who believed in the harmonious development of all human powers, both physical and mental. As they lived in closer communion with nature than we moderns do, they were consequently more receptive to those impressions of nature which stimulate the powers of the soul. In this

way they attained a unity on the basis of which they were enabled to work most effectively towards their ideal, namely, the representation of the highest type of life as a nation. Humboldt ascribes the emphasis which the Greeks laid on the training of the body through gymnastic and athletic exercise to the fact that in honor of the memory of their national heroes they sought to promote any training which would produce similar heroes. This very memory and the glory given to the victors of the public games furnished a constant stimulus to such physical arts. For Humboldt it was a proof of the aesthetic and refined nature of the Greek love for sports that they honored the foot-race above all other Olympic games, and it was not strange that there should grow out of these athletic competitions the great festivals in which music, philosophy and art were united. The physical development of the Greeks was thus constantly being refined by contact with the activities of a more intellectual nature, and out of the union of facul-

ties there grew a versatility which placed the Greeks on a high plane of civilization. Humboldt in his essay "Latium und Hellas" speaks of the political nature of the Greeks as another expression or phase of life in which they show their ideal character. Pride in noble origin and in great possessions was a national as well as an individual trait, but they did not abuse these privileges, and the Greek states according to Humboldt, were curiously free from the oppression of the middle classes by the richer class. The form of government was that of a democracy, exercised by the people. Greek national spirit was strong, and in their final struggle with the Romans they fought bravely to the end of their powers for the freedom and honor of their country.

The Greeks were deeply religious, for their religion gratified their passion for the supernatural, and it contained the essence of the secrets of the universe. Their Gods were to them living beings, children

having no knowledge of good or evil. They were ruled over by the same fate and subject to the same decrees as were mortal beings. The Greek ideas of the creation and organization of the world were indefinite and childish, but their religion was the field in which all philosophy and art united. To the common people religion meant only sacrifice and the worship of idols, but to the more cultured, it was the relation to a divine world which each man conceived in a more or less spiritual way, according to his own nature, and through which he could enter into the world of art, philosophy, science and history. It was characteristic of the Greek mind that their religion was a religion of the people, never a state religion and that a great amount of freedom in religious matters was left to the individual. The Greek idea of fate as a ruling power in the world was the accepted explanation of the forces at work in nature which determined the course of man, and in reconciling themselves to the view that

human existence is perishable, episodical and full of sorrow interspersed with much joy and happiness, their restlessness and the sting of pain was turned to a pensive melancholy. It was man's duty to fulfill in the noblest way possible his destiny whether this was a happy or a sorrowful one. Humboldt admired this conception of the Greeks, and his whole philosophy of life was strongly tinged by these ideas. In Humboldt as in the Greeks, the love of life as such was combined with a love for the inner world of ideas, and all they comprised. Humboldt gives a short but expressive appreciation of the ancients in a letter to Charlotte Diede, a friend of his youth. He says the ancients had attracted him from the time of his youth, and that the study of their character and of their writings had become his real life-work. For it was among the Greeks that man was nearer his origin, that he was a more harmonious and natural being and (he) manifested greater simplicity and depth in his thoughts and feelings.

The conclusion which Humboldt drew from the nature of the Greeks as it is expressed in the various phases of their life, is that they were the nation best suited to furnish the foundation for the aesthetic ideal of humanity and that the study of the Greeks and of their works would be the best preparation for cultured humanity to attain this ideal. Although he idealized the ancients in many respects, Humboldt recognized the fact that they lacked above all things subjectivity, the art of reflection and depth of feeling, that, as Schiller put it, their nature was based more on an ideal of sensuousness than on an absolute ideal. Owing to this fact, the Greeks were better suited to lead the way to the ideal than to represent it themselves. Art which reached its highest development among the Greeks was to guide man in his growth towards truth. Philosophy and History were also to have their part in this development but the consummation of all this growth was to be found in the moder world, in a

could build upon the spirit of the ancients.

Humboldt having realized that the Greeks in their striving towards the ideal had failed to acquire certain essential qualities, looked around for such a modern nation which would be able to carry on and complete this ideal. His own German nation seemed to him to have received this trust from the Greeks and to have the power to reach the end which the ancients had set for themselves. He found many qualities in the Germans which would fit them above all other people for this undertaking. In the first place, they possessed in their innate idealism a natural affinity to the Greek mind which made it possible for them to understand and appreciate this nation. From this it followed that the Germans were best able to reproduce the classical spirit, and that in adding their own genius to that of the Greeks they became the creators of all that was best in art and poetry. Their mission in life was to effect the union

of the ancients and the moderns into one type, the ideal. In other words, they were destined to realize humanity in a higher and more modern form, and they could accomplish this only by building upon the foundation laid in the lives and works of the ancient Greeks. Johannes Schubart in his introductory remarks to the selections from Humboldt's philosophical works speaks of the relation of the Greek and the German spirit of the people, of the "Volksgeist", as Humboldt conceived it. This Greek spirit according to him is directed towards a harmonious development of the inner life, the life of the soul. The French have the same love of form and the same aesthetic appreciation as the Greeks, but the Germans stand in the closest relation to the ancients in the depth of their philosophical conceptions. It is characteristic of the Germans to bring together and harmonize the qualities peculiar to other nations. They learn to appreciate the good points of others and to adapt themselves to new and

higher standpoint. This susceptibility and receptivity makes them successful interpreters of the old as well as the new world, and enables them to become an ideal people..

Humboldt himself as a leader of his nation became through his philosophy and in his inner life, the representative of both, the Greeks and the Germans. He showed that if the German nation as a whole could not attain the ideal of humanity which he advocated, individual Germans could do all in their power to establish the possibility of attaining it.

Chapter III

ART AS AN EXPRESSION OF HUMBOLDT'S IDEAL

We have already seen that the ideal of humanity was an aesthetic ideal, that men like Lessing, Schiller and Goethe were proclaiming aesthetic education as the best kind of preparation for true humanity. Schiller in his "Aesthetische Briefe" advocated this education as the one which alone could develop the idealbeing within us, that it alone could bring us back to nature, from which we originated, in a more perfect and harmonious form. Humboldt had followed the development of Schiller's thoughts and ideas on the aesthetic education of man most closely, and in his critical appreciation of Goethe's "Hermann und

Dorothea", he presents his theory of aesthetics. This ideal of culture constitutes the very heart of his theory. Art could only be true insofar as it became the uplifter of humanity. The nature of art according to Humboldt, is ideal, it expresses individuality, universality and totality, the three factors necessary for humanity to attain truth. A fundamental principle of art is the fusion of individuality and ideality. Art thus becomes the embodiment or the symbol of the divine.

The following pages will be devoted to a description of the different ways in which art according to Humboldt was to lead humanity to its consummation. To begin with, Humboldt said that the mere conception of beauty, insofar as it was a symbol of human perfection, could produce an inner unity in that he who was nourished with beauty of form and attuned to the beauty which the senses could enjoy, would gradually acquire a moral sense for inner beauty corresponding to the outer and physical

sense. For art, he said, represented the spiritual or intellectual through the physical, it made reality an embodiment of the infinite and became the interpreter of the finite and the infinite. Humboldt said art had a double purpose as an educative factor. In the first place it increased the activity of our spirit, it stirred up the latent powers in us which strove for universality. In the second place it bound together all the forces of man's being into a harmonious unity. This inner harmony of being was the very essence of the ideal which the Greeks possessed, for they were the people who both individually and as a nation came nearest to the ideal. The way in which art could bring this about was as Humboldt expressed it, by first revealing the inner spirit to the being itself which before had only a dim notion of the nature of its true ego. In the study of this self, the being is drawn deeper and deeper into itself, outer reality is put aside and the ideal character which lives in

every man is brought to light. Poetry, more especially, epic poetry, is given the highest mission, as it is best suited for presenting man's true vocation to him, and for pointing out to him the ideal possibilities within him. Epic poetry should reconcile man to life and should thereby fit him for active life - service. But inasmuch as it gave a complete survey of humanity and affected man as a whole, bringing him into close relationship with the outer world, it should also stimulate the activity of those powers of the spirit with which it passed beyond the realms of reality. Thus the burden of reality would be removed, and the spirit could respond to the only true laws of being, inner freedom and necessity. The life which would then result would be the life in the world of ideas, the highest type of existence. Here alone, the real nature of things was revealed. Though art was to represent ideal characters as examples for humanity, nevertheless these characters had to be human and natural

so that every normal being could understand them and make them a part of himself. Man inspired by the inner life which art had given him would then give his service to the world. For as Humboldt said, it was the last duty of man to unite himself with the outer world, to make it a part of his inner being, and finally to give it back to the world as a more finished product. The power behind art which was common to art and to man and which was most vital in the attainment of the ideal was the imagination. Humboldt described it as the power of the mind which served man in uniting the life of the senses with the spiritual life. It was alone through the imagination of man that poetry could fulfill its purpose, that it could represent man as a unity, a totality. The force that art had in building up and determining character and inner life lay in the fact that its creations, the work of art itself had to be considered as an individual. It had a unity, an inner force, and a law of being through which it

exerted a given influence. Thus art by virtue of its purpose and development was identical with the development of man, but the nature of art was more ideal than that of man and had thus to become the leader of man towards the ideal of humanity.

Genius might be called the highest expression of art. It is the creative, the generative force of the mind. It is the power which stimulates and calls into life the new and masterful ideas that could lead one into the ideal world. Itself the highest manifestation of nature and of truth, genius is also an example of the human spirit in its most consummate form, the being that acts in complete harmony of all its powers. It is being, expanded to a world in which inner freedom and inner necessity rule, and at the same time, it is according to Humboldt, the concentration of man's whole intellectuality upon the one point assigned to him by nature. Its greatest significance and worth for the ideal of humanity is to be found

in its religious nature, for it seems to represent the highest and most passionate longing for the Divine.

Chapter IV

THE FOUNDATIONS AND EXPRESSIONS OF HUMBOLDT'S IDEAL

The many expressions which Humboldt found for his ideal of humanity offer the most convincing proof of the sincerity of his philosophy. There were three determining factors in Humboldt's idea of humanity. The first factor and the point of departure for this ideal was individuality. In this was to be concentrated a clearly defined personality, in a sense one-sided, as one-sidedness is synonomous with virility and character. Individuality as the expression of the soul was to develop on the basis of this concentrated strength into the second factor, universality. In this stage ofgrowth all life

and bring one drawing for the enriching of the soul. inward
Aesthetic culture, through art and philosophy, was to
deepen and broaden the individual aspiring to universality,
with all powers of his will and soul. Only after indi-
viduality has passed on through universality could the
third and greatest factor be reached - Totality. This
was the force which determined the relation of individuality
to universality and the manner of their union in the
personality. Humboldt designated the power which enabled
the individual to pass through individuality and univer-
sality to totality as a cultural impulse or a longing for
the highest kind of life possible.

Though this was the outline of the general
development of this individual or the race in its way
towards the ideal, it will be well to see just what indi-
viduality meant to Humboldt and the exact course he
thought it must follow to reach the ideal.

The aesthetic culture which Humboldt accepted

as the means for perfecting man was for him self-culture. As he early expressed it, his motto was, Bilde dich selbst, (bilde Dich) and influence others through what you are, or rather, what you have made of yourself. Each individual should form a world of his own and create an inner being, which he might call personality. His worth would then only be judged from this character, this real self. Here alone could man find inner freedom which made him independent of outer circumstances. True individuality presupposed a perfect harmony in the individual, a unity of thought and feeling which made it possible for man to fulfill his mission in the world. Man could make of his life what he wished if he realized that his first duty was to develop all his powers to the highest degree of strength and proportion. For in each individual there lay a worthy characteristic which if stimulated to growth by the individual himself would necessarily bring about the development of his other powers. The highest type of life according

to Humboldt would then be the life in ideas. In a letter to Charlotte Diede, Humboldt said that the most sublime and wonderful thing that man was able to apprehend were the pure ideas. These he could only understand by the inner life. It should therefor be the duty and aspiration of man to bring order and clearness into the circle of his ideas. Life would then consist in first drawing the world into one's being, then transforming it to ideas and finally, in realizing these ideas in the same world. In other words man would reveal in his outer life as well as in his thought and feeling the knowledge gained from the universe he had explored and the truth he had found. The only true life would be the life of reflection and self-culture, and all other existence would be accidental, life determined by outer circumstances. True happiness could alone be found in freedom from external forces. This life of ideas should be common to all individuals who were striving

towards the ideal of humanity. Each man had to answer certain general demands which the inner law of his being made upon him, but besides these, everyone had a special calling whose character was determined by his inner inclination and predisposition to it.

The individual should then, independent of everything and everyone else push on to the goal and though the universal ideal or the ideal of humanity could not be represented by one being it could find itself in a number of these complete individuals. Humboldt's plea then was for totality, and what he looked for in the expressions of the ideal of humanity was the means of building up individual types which when united would form a harmonious whole, or the ideal itself.

Humboldt's philosophy of history, his philosophy of language, and the "Volksgeist" which is for him a uniting factor between the two, are three expressions of his ideal of humanity, to which he assigns great

importance. The conception of the "Volksgeist" as an element of union of the two philosophies is based on the fact that language rises out of the "Volksgeist" and that the nation can only appear as a unified individuality through language. Language said Humboldt, is the appearance in reality of the mind of the nations. The connection of language with history is thus through this mind of the nations. Humboldt studied the history of the various nations from the point of view of their mental development and this could be done most satisfactorily through language which was the expression of this development. Every language, said, Humboldt, indicates the definite stage a nation has arrived at in its philosophy of life. At the same time language determines the nature of the specific "Weltanschauung". It does this by bringing the mental power of men into communion with each other. whereby there results clearness in thought as well as mental development. Language is the organ of inner being

and the revelation of the human mind; it represents not a dead creation, but an activity. For the entire man, all his great powers are alive in language and the fact that it proceeds from his inner being makes it a force in impelling man to seek for inner freedom and perfection. The supreme significance of language, however, lies in its function of being a mediator between man and man, between man and nature and the outer world and finally between the individual and his nation. It reveals to humanity its own character and its position in the seen and unseen; it shows also the way to the ideal by freeing the spirit of man, and is itself striving towards the realization of the ideal with success because it embraces most completely all of mankind, and unites the individual and national characteristics with those common to all humanity.

Philosophy of history was so vital an expression of Humboldt's ideal of humanity because it dealt with leading factors in the development of this ideal. For the

very significance of history and of the historian lay in the fact that their work was based on the ideal as well as the real. The historian had to represent the great events in the history of the world as they occurred in reality, but at the same time he had to furnish the idea, the logical sequence which existed between them. According to Humboldt the ultimate purpose of history must be to give a true and clear picture of the destiny of humanity. The advantages and benefit of history to man is that it awakens a true sense of reality in him. This brings with it a realization of the evanescence of existence here on earth as well as a knowledge of our dependence on past and present exterior causes. On the other hand, history effects a consciousness of inner freedom of the spirit and the superior power of the inner laws of being over reality. To exercise this influence on man the historian must separate the accidental from the essential in history. His world picture must give the inner unbroken thread of

events as well as the determining forces behind them. Here the knowledge of humanity and of man will help him, for whatever forces are operative in the history of mankind are operative in the inner being of man. There are certain limitations to the power of a historian. For a history of the world is not conceivable without a ruling power, a controlling idea, and the historian is powerless to grasp this supreme force. Outside of this natural development which is determined by an unknown cause there lie events whose course he can follow. Back of those are ideas pervading and ruling the history of the world, and these are the ultimate objects of investigation for him. Human individuality, said Humboldt, was an idea expressed in reality, and national individuality was only a more complete representation of the same idea. The national expression is sometimes more easy to understand for under certain circumstances and in certain historical periods man developed in masses or as a race. It is,

however, the central principle of individuality in history which lives on through the rather unimportant events in the life of a nation, and which is everlasting in its influence o humanity. From this point of view then, history is the realization of one idea represented by humanity. Its immediate purpose for man is to teach him how to deal with reality as well as how to be ruled by ideas and yet not loose himself in their abstract forms. In his paragraph on the determining cause in the history of the world, Humboldt discusses three factors, and finally concludes that there are only two which seriously affect the course of events in the history of the world. These are first, the natural laws of necessity, and second, the freedom of mind. Both can be found active in the history of man as well as in the history of the nations, but while freedom of mind appears in a more definite form in the individual, the natural law of necessity is more clearly revealed through the nation. As the best

example of the power of freedom in giving history a new direction, Humboldt takes the genius or the creative power of man. Here the new and undiscovered suddenly proceeds from a great mind, itself ruled over by masterful ideas and pushes things into new channels. The mind may be that of a warrior, a statesman or an artist, for all are governed by a higher force and what they create or produce is something of which they before had no clear conception. Their activity is the very opposite of the more even course of (the) natural development, it is spontaneous and sporadic and of more interest to the student of humanity.

In spite of the fact that Humboldt gives individuality such a high place in his theory concerning the development of mankind, he here gives the national genius the most exalted position of all others. This is based on his conception of the nation as a complete individuality. He say the nation as an organization subject to the same changes and ready for like progress as the individual.

Greek type most perfectly illustrated the individual and national development toward the ideal of humanity.

In a letter to Schiller, Humboldt very clearly presented his view on the purpose of history. He said it seemed to him the time had come to examine the progress of the human mind up to the present time and to consider its possibilities for the future. It should be the duty of every individual as well as every nation who sought to perfect itself to discover the nature of the ideal of humanity and then to compare that ideal with the picture of humanity drawn from the past and present. In that way a knowledge of what still had to be done in the attainment of the ideal could be gained.

The philosophy of religion played a relatively unimportant part in Humboldt's ideal of humanity. He himself though a religious character in the true sense of the word was neither a church-goer nor a believer in any formal creed. His philosophy of life was based on the

best principles, he had deep respect for the convictions of others but believed in spiritual freedom. In his early life he had what he called moments of religious fervor which were brought on now by a beautiful scene in nature, now inspired by the majesty of some great soul, but these moods were only transitory. Humboldt acknowledged the existence of a ruling and regulative force in the world and said it could be called the divinity. But religion, he said was a purely subjective matter dependent on the individual and his conception of God. Thus the Greeks whose whole existence was merged in art had a religion of art. In this Humboldt's religion was like the Greeks, it was aesthetic, for as he himself expressed it, art was the noblest and most expressive symbol of the divinity. The world of sense was for him a disciplinary stage, only the step for a higher and better life, and a place where one must gain strength to grasp the meaning of the infinite. There was never any doubt in Humboldt's

mind as to the continuation of life after death. He said that the after-life must solve all the problems of this world and our inner life must be perfected there. The influence of religion, he said, was strongest on the inner man, in the formation of his ideas of life's purpose and on his mode of action. He gave ethics the same power as religion to mould man into the ideal form. Haym said his religion was nothing more than a deeply conceived humanism and idealism, and that doubtless is why he had so much respect for the ideal side of religious conceptions, and for the church life of the common people. He felt the great purpose of religion to be its power of uniting all people of the nation on the basis of their manhood, and of eliminating the rather artificial differences of social standing.

Humboldt expressed his philosophy of religion in a most personal way to his friend Charlotte Diede in their correspondence. He said the great good Christianity had done for the world was the bringing about of the brother-

bond of man in a bond of love and duty toward one another, as well as the spiritual communion between man and God. He thought that goodness, purity of thought and conscientious fulfilling of one's duty or even the effort to do it were satisfying to God, such as he believed him to be. The fact that everyman has a different conception of God is a relatively unimportant matter, the ultimate truth known to all is that there is an allwise Being who rules the natural course of things in our life and in the world, that whatever happens to us whether it bring joy or sorrow is for our good. The purity of our motives and the nature of our life are responsible for whatever blessings or misfortunes God sends us and we are even to consider the adverse times as tests of our manhood. God in his goodness and majesty has the power of enlarging the soul, of freeing it from the weight of care and sorrow. The peace that comes to man from communion with nature, Humboldt said, must come from the divine Being, but it was never a

direct gift, for man could only get it through introspection. By an effort of the will alone could he receive that divine peace from his inner life. Death meant for Humboldt the dissolution of an uncompleted state and the transition to a better and deeper existence. If such a belief was constantly present in man it would be the foundation of inner peace and of unremitting effort as well as a source of comfort in times of sorrow. God had veiled the future so that there should be no brooding over it, life here was to be lived and as perfectly as possible perfected through the inner existence. It was then the duty of each one to mould into finer and finer shape one's inner life, to make one's self independent of outer circumstances and to fulfill one's mission in life. The active life, he said, was necessary for the course of the world and although in itself it had little worth, it was nevertheless an indispensible stepping-stone to the higher life of ideas.

After all has been said, Humboldt's philosophy

of religion is little more than an ethical philosophy which may find expression in art or history as well as in religion. For art and history are factors in the development of his ideal of humanity and all are based on the conception of the dependence of man on an infinite power ruling the world.

Chapter V

HUMBOLDT AS THE EMBODIMENT OF HIS IDEAL

It is a pleasure to be able to show, as I hope this chapter will, that the embodiment of Humboldt's ideal of humanity is his own life. In his public service filled with political, educational and other duties as well as in his private life, among his more intimate friends and in his family circle, he remained a true follower of the ideal. The question which he put to others: what should be one's attitude towards the course of events of one's time in which prevalent opinions, customs, constitutions and nations were being uprooted, how should one conduct himself in his private and public life, this ques-

vion he first put to himself. In a letter to his friend Wolf, regarding his political activity, he answered this by the statement that one could only do effective service if one worked on quietly, patiently and persistently towards the goal one had set. That although by most mature deliberation one might not at first accomplish one's end, if one plodded ahead with dogged courage one would finally reach the point of success. This was no mere theory of Humboldt's, for his whole political career in which he struggled to uphold the honor and the rights of Prussia and of his fatherland against other powers, was hampered by the short-sighted and overbearing chancellor Hardenberg and his supporters, and yet he bore them no personal ill-will. It saddened him, and rightly so, to see that their attitude was detrimental to the best interests of their state and country, but on the other hand as far as he himself was concerned their unfriendly actions only strengthened his ever present desire to leave public

life. He was extremely conscientious in the fulfillment of his official duties, and would fight bitterly for what he considered the right cause.

The hopeless condition of a government with such a thinking head and the weakness of the individual department of state finally made him loose faith in the possibility of success and in 1820 he was glad to accept his dismissal from service. But while he was still in the midst of it all, his keen wit enjoyed mounting above all other minds in political discussion, and although he hated all such intrigues as the French and Austrian ambassadors indulged in, no one could get ahead of him in play of words and diplomatic tactics. Throughout his activity in the conference he preserved a poise and an unapproachable bearing that baffled and awed his opponents. Humboldt's reserve sprang from the refinement of his nature, he did not wish to reveal his inner life to any but intimate friends. The infinite nature of man was to him of far

greater importance in his ideal of humanity than were the greatest political affairs. In a letter to Welcker in this connection, he said that deeds were not the criterion of successful activity but that it was the doing of things that made them worth while. We are safe in ascribing Humboldt's rather temporary political influence to this passive conception of his duty towards the world. It is true that for several years (1807-1814), he was in the thick of affairs, throwing himself soul and body into the political cause of his country. We even find him writing to Caroline von Wolzogen, in 1813, that he was enjoying the heat of the battle into which fate had thrown him, but this enthusiasm came from his earnest desire to fulfill his task and never destroyed the fundamental principle of his life - to perfect himself.

During all the years as ambassador in Vienna and Rome he devoted a part of every day to the study of Greek life and thought as a means of developing his inner being.

He was an idealist through and through and not the man to enforce new political forms of government, but when we consider his dutiful attitude towards an activity he would not himself have chosen, we are convinced of the sincerity and honesty in his development towards his ideal.

Humboldt's most significant and fruitful public service was his work as head of the department of education in the Prussian ministry. Here as in all other phases of his life he was governed by ideas based on his ideal of humanity. In realizing the political need of strengthening the Prussian state as well as the whole country, he put his faith in the higher institutions of learning as means of answering this need. His first step, therefor, was the reorganization of the whole system of the "Gymnasien" and Universities. Goethe in a letter to Knebel in 1810 said he knew of no man better fitted to accomplish this reform. Humboldt found the fundamental principle of his reform expressed in Pestalozzi's method of using learning

as a factor for awakening self-activity. Development should proceed from the higher nature of man, he should be allowed all possible freedom and independence in the exercise of his powers, but learning should make him conscious of his possibilities. So with Prussia, the ideal state for culture, Humboldt desired above all things its intellectual regeneration as a basis for higher morality and more complete humanity. This, as in the case of the individual, could only be accomplished by self-culture and to stimulate this was the task of the higher institutions of learning.

Humboldt in his treatise on pedagogy devotes a section to the consideration of the inner and outer organization of these institutions, especially that of the universities and of the academies. It is the directing of these schools that will determine the conception of these institutions as the sole center for the moral culture of the nation, ~~is~~ a conception based on the idea that they should further learning in its truest sense. The fundamental principles

for this advancement are, on the one hand, freedom, and on the other hand unconscious intellectual competition. It is characteristic of higher institutions of learning, said Humboldt, to look upon knowledge as a field for investigation which will never be entirely discovered, whereas the elementary schools confine their entire work to the study of definite and fixed truths. In the former, the instructors and students are coworkers in search of learning and are more or less dependent on each other for success. These institutions, as Humboldt said, represent the intellectual life of those people who from superabundance of time or from inner desire are lead to such paths of investigation and learning as are offered them.

The duty of the state towards these institutions is very clear to Humboldt. It must preserve their life and activity and must keep the functions of the elementary schools quite distinct from those of the higher schools, at the same time it must not interfere with the actual

development of either. The chief power consists first in furnishing intellectual stimulus through the choice of good men for the institution, secondly in insuring freedom in its work. On no account should the state expect or demand any direct return for this, it must regard the effect which this learning will have on the nation as its own reward. For the development of character and efficiency in its citizens should be its highest wish, and true knowledge which springs from the depth of man's nature and returns to the depth fulfilled, can alone accomplish this. As a preparation for the acquisition of learning the state should see that the elementary schools prepare boys for life and activity in higher institutions. This would necessitate a harmonious development of all their powers and would put the students in the receptive frame of mind necessary to acquire knowledge. The university would be most closely related to the state as it has most direct bearing on practical matters. It could therefor represent

goal completely the educational factor in the development

towards the ideal of humanity.

Chapter VI

HUMBOLDT'S PRIVATE LIFE

Humboldt's private life was the most convincing expression of the ideas that governed him. As conscientious as we found him to be in the exercise of his duties as a statesman and as an educator, he was yet far more ardent in his aspiration of self-culture. In his letters to Charlotte Diede he clearly stated what his attitude towards life, its adversities, and opportunities, was. Life for him was a unity, a definite task which had to be accomplished in the time given. Businesslike activity, although it was a necessity to man, much as are food and sleep, was inferior to the inner life of ideas. God gave

man a double sphere, one of activity, and one of contemplation. The work of the former must be conscientiously carried out for its own sake, but the latter is the only true existence. The ideas alone are able to make a man independent of outer and unimportant circumstances, as well as to give him the necessary food for his inner development. Humboldt throws the responsibility of the success of our lives on ourselves; he said that it is of more consequence to us in what way we receive the decrees of fate than are those decrees themselves, and we should therefore learn to control our attitude towards life. Lack of patience and resignation only aggravate misfortunes, so for Humboldt the first duty of man was submission to the laws of existence. Any great sorrow he said could be experienced without hopelessness and bitterness if one made it a part of one's inner being and accepted it as a factor in the development of the whole. It may then even become an ennobling and clarifying influence in

one's life. If a man writes this as Humboldt did, after experiencing such a sorrow, his wife's death, it gives is theory vital worth. Humboldt considered the meaning of life to be a preparation for death and the existence based on ideas was the only one worthy of such a mission. Its end was to be the harmonious development of all powers of the individual to the ideal state. This could only be gained through a liberal education, the aesthetic culture.

Every man, according to Humboldt and Schiller, had his real self hidden under the apparent personality and it was to be the duty of the aesthetic training to develop and reveal it. The quiet, meditative existence would be most conducive to this end. Eternal values came only from inner life and could not be influenced by eternal causes. Man's highest duty was to develop himself, as he could thereby bring about the greatest amount of good for others. Humboldt said the best way

to face life was to take everything as it came and to accept the inevitable as a means of strength and enrichment for the inner being. As the center of life was individuality it was only natural that such stress should be laid on man's subjectivity. As Spranger rightly says, Humboldt's theory of ethics was one of individualistic self-culture, of self-assertion without activity and of affirmation of life without accompanying passionate energy. In his discussion of the advantage of the meditative existence Humboldt says the pursuit of ideas makes for the independence of man as well as for the free application of his energy. Ideas lift the spirit to great peace, and influence the entire man for his good. The older one gets, the more attractive does this kind of life become to one and in Humboldt's experience this was certainly verified. Ideas governed him from beginning to end and made of him the man he was. It is touching to see how fully he appreciated the favors of providence.

He wrote to Charlotte Diede that he realized that his happiness was due rather to fortune than to his own merit. It was this attitude that found him prepared for misfortune and that made him look upon adversity as a part of the world's course, and not as the agency of a being ill-willed towards the universe. He said all he did at such times of trouble was to control his life and actions more closely. Humboldt was by nature calm and self-possessed, in his own words, he never really longed for anything nor missed anything with special fervor. But he did not, therefore, think less of men with more passionate characters; he said each man must work out his own salvation in his own way. He welcomed new types of men because of what inspiration they might bring ore; he admired their good characteristics and overlooked their weaknesses. Humboldt said that the knowledge of many nations and peoples was of prime importance to the strengthening and broadening of individuality as well as

to one's understanding of humanity. This was the reason why he took such great delight in traveling. He once wrote to Goethe that although our lives compass but a small span of time, we can at least get the greatest amount of good out of it if we learn to know as many different types of men as possible. Life to him appeared like a play in which the observer gained much power by merely watching the development of the characters about him.

Humboldt was not so much a conscious leader of men as he was a student of human life for the sake of his own self-culture. Every man must live in such a way as his best nature directs and Humboldt in his own case found this course easy. Spranger says that Humboldt was not a complicated nature to one who knew him well. His life, he said, could be compared to a Greek piece of sculpture in its peaceful and well-defined lines. This was not, however, what most people saw in him. He cultivated a rather satirical attitude towards things which estranged him from men.

As he himself said, his was a double existence, one, his life of activity in public service; the other, his real inner life known only to himself and a few friends. In the first he appeared as a brilliant, entertaining, rather sarcastic man of the world; in the second he became what he was, the man. Here he expressed the idea of the "schöne Seele", the fine-feeling soul susceptible to the noblest things of life. His essentially æsthetic nature gave him an appreciation and interest in the life of the senses, so that he never disregarded reality. He did, however, want to unite the different qualities in his life and bring about the harmony of all his powers, and that he succeeded is the inspiring feature of his life. Schiller spoke of the rare totality or unity of Humboldt's character which as he realized, he himself did not have. He said that in conversation with Humboldt he felt his ideas developing more quickly and clearly, and thoughts long unexpressed were given form through his influence. As Caroline von Wolzogen very aptly put it, Humboldt gave immeasurably through

his very receptivity.

His greatest desire was to be a cultured man and so he had bent his efforts on developing his powers and he had made it a point to make everything worth while in life a part of his inner being. He wanted to feel when death came that he had enjoyed, suffered and appreciated all that fate had brought him. Only by doing this could he be satisfied that he had fulfilled his life-purpose. With Spranger we can say that Humboldt was true to his conviction, that he embraced the universe, at the same time preserving the deep inner peace of the soul. From first to last his life was a harmony through which major and minor chords vibrated but into which there was never introduced a shrill note nor a false tone.

It would give an incomplete picture of Humboldt's character to overlook two facts that meant so much to him. The one was his relationship to women; the other his attitude towards freedom. In woman he found the supplement of

of his own self; it was she who alone made it possible for him to reach his full moral stature. Humboldt realized this more and more in his intercourse with his wife. "Li" represented the perfect type of womanhood. Husband and wife were everything to each other, each was to the other a guide and inspiration. Humboldt once wrote to "Li" that through her he had come to the appreciation of the beautiful and the true, and to his friend Charlotte von Wolzogen he said that the greatest blessing for him in life had been his intimate relation with his "Li". As for his nature, it had a womanly strain which gave him a keener insight and a deeper understanding of feminine character than most men possess. "Li" said he had the soul of a man and at the same time the most tender feeling for womanhood. What Humboldt admired most in woman was the peace and harmony of her being which made her a cultural influence towards the shaping of humanity. He said that through her ideal qualities woman could do much to even up

the conflicts of life. In his opinion a type of humanity almost ideal would be gained from the union of man and woman. Perhaps the most touching illustration of this sympathy for woman in Humboldt is his correspondence with Charlotte Diede whose spiritual advisor, if it may be so-called, he became. Here he most clearly explained his philosophy of life and his belief that women have greater depth of life than men. He said that their natural occupation is of such a nature as permits them to pursue their inner thoughts and feelings undisturbed by the too engrossing activities of a man's life. Woman would thus become a spiritual guide to man and together with man's powers of intellect, man and woman would strive more successfully for ideal life.

The idea of freedom, more especially of aesthetic freedom was at the heart of the entire eighteenth century ideal of humanity. Schiller was the greatest champion of this idea. In his philosophical poems as well as in his

"Aesthetische Briefe" he made it clear that freedom affected man as a whole, not merely his intellectual nature. Thus it was freedom of mind combined with power, but always aesthetic in nature, for art alone can waken this freedom in us. Schiller expressed what Humboldt felt. Humboldt considered freedom and personality as the two prime values in life, and the former he said depended on the latter. He said that poetry through imagination gave freedom in its power of banishing reality and leading us into a condition of totality. It made us susceptible to the possibilities of our inner self. Man's dignity depends on this feeling of freedom, and through it he is lead into the life of ideas. The genius possesses it; he is independent of mechanical laws and lives in the realm of ideas. Schiller to Humboldt was the embodiment of the ideal, as in him all powers were united in absolute freedom.

We have seen how consistently Humboldt applied this principle of freedom to his educational and political

reforms. Institutions as well as men should be allowed to develop out of their natural selves and with inner freedom. External culture should never be forced upon them. Humboldt felt that the meditative existence was the best place to develop this freedom and it was here that he claimed kinship with the Hindu philosophy. Both advocated the life of resignation and inner freedom of mind as the ideal existence. For both there were two circles of life, one of outer activity in the world, the other the life of ideas. The latter was supreme and through it alone could one grasp the great secrets of life and of God. The mind must separate the finite and the infinite and in this work it must be freed from external forces. This was the reason why Humboldt devoted as much time as possible to his inner development. He said that the older he became the more freedom did he gain in thought and feeling and therein lay the advantage of old age.

It would not be right in a discussion of this

kind to disregard Humboldt's weak points. Spranger briefly states the limitations of this whole ideal of humanity when he says that it was essentially an individual aristocracy. It was a secondary consideration what man was to man, and self-development was all-important. This ideal set aside problems of social ethics and directed itself only to a chosen few. As Spranger said, this was an aesthetic egotism for it promised happiness to those who lived for their inner development. It was also too idealistic; it considered man as he could be instead of the more vital question of man as he was. It perhaps went deeper into the problem of life, but it did not rest on as sure a ground as does the modern scientific thought. As for Humboldt himself as a writer, the very beauty of his nature, the harmony of his powers became his weakness. For strength and intellect, as Haym said, rarely combined in Humboldt to produce any marked literary success. Körner said he could see no sign of the genius about him.

He was in everything more receptive than productive. There was in him an over-balance of reflection and self-absorption. In his desire for culture and inner harmony, Humboldt scattered his energies too much and undertook more than he could carry out. He needed to vitalize and universalize his life purpose, said Haym. In his political life he failed to produce a lasting effect because he lacked the real interest for his work. His idealism was too little impregnated with reality. To us it seems a great mistake that a man like Humboldt curtailed his influence on humanity by his mistaken idea of duty. He consciously hid his real and best self under a coat of reserve and sarcasm that made him unpopular with many. He who could have been a preacher became more of a hermit.

To us who do have the privilege of knowing the real man, Humboldt is a great inspiration. His untiring effort to develop into the highest type of being, his hopeful attitude towards life, and his message to humanity

appeal to all who are bent on the same general course. If, as Hayn says, Humboldt cannot be called a great man, he was what is yet better a good man and he was true to what he thought was his calling in life. If every man obeyed the voice of his better self as Humboldt did, there would grow up a host of leaders who would mould this great ideal of humanity into a more practical and universal form!

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